

SUSPENSION BRIDGE  
CARLYLE ILLINOIS  
CLINTON Co.

HABS. NO. ILL. 225  
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ILL,  
14-CARL,  
1-

*Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings*  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
DISTRICT NO. ILL. 2

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
EDGAR E. LUNDEEN - DISTRICT OFFICER  
CORN BELT BANK BUILDING - BLOOMINGTON ILL.

SUSPENSION BRIDGE  
Carlyle, Clinton County, Illinois

Owner. County of Clinton.

Date of Erection. 1859.

Architect. Unknown.

Builder. Mr. Griffith D. Smith of Pennsylvania.

Present Condition. Abandoned for general service and is rapidly deteriorating, especially the tops of the towers. The original railing was a criss-cross pattern of boards.

Number of Stories. \_\_\_\_\_

Materials of Construction. The bases are of hewn stone and extend approximately fifteen feet below the surface of the ground. The bases are capped with solid brick towers, plastered on the outside with cement mortar. The runways and supports are of oak, with stranded wire cables and strap iron and round bar iron hangers.

Other Existing Records.

Written data:

"History of Marion and Clinton Counties"--  
Page 175. Brink-McDonough & Company,  
Publishers. 1881.

"History of Illinois"--Vol. II, Page 213,  
by George Smith.

"History of Southern Illinois"--Vol. I,  
Page 444, by George Smith.

Additional Data. In 1806 the territorial government established a mail route from Vincennes, Indiana to St. Louis, passing through Carlyle. Originally the Kaskaskia was forded, but soon an interesting sort of bridge called a "mud bridge" was erected. This was constructed as follows: A place in the stream was found where the banks were firm and not too steep. Very tall, well proportioned trees were found of which to make mud sills. These sills were sometimes fifty to seventy-five feet long. The opposite ends of these sills, usually three or four, would be let into the banks, down to the level of the water at ordinary stages. Upon these sills, heavy oak planks would be laid and securely fastened. The banks were then graded down so a team could easily ascend and descend. The side of the bridge toward the up stream was usually six or eight inches lower than the side next to the down stream. When the water began to rise, the weight of the water in passing over the bridge had a tendency to hold the bridge down instead of to float it. Stakes were securely placed on the sides of the bridge to show the location of the bridge and also to give the depth when the bridge was covered with water. If the stakes were covered, the traveler was warned not to cross. All that was needed to construct such a bridge

were axmen, scorers, hewers, and whip-saw men. The auger and the white oak pin served the purpose of the modern spikes.

This bridge went down in 1830.

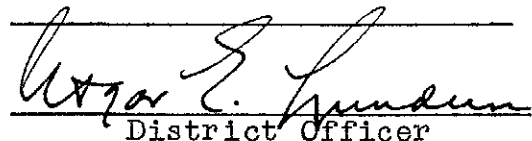
Apparently, fording the stream was again resorted to until the suspension bridge was erected in 1859-60. This bridge was erected by the county at a cost of \$45,000. It was free to all citizens of the county, but foreign travelers were required to pay toll. In the flood of 1875, the water touched the bridge but did no damage. About 1932, the State of Illinois erected a modern, steel bridge about 350 feet north, and the suspension bridge was abandoned for general traffic. It is deteriorating quite rapidly, and apparently no attempt is considered for its preservation.

References:

History of Marion and Clinton Counties, 1881.  
Pages 173 and 175. Brink-McDonough & Company,  
Publishers.

History of Illinois by Smith. Vol. II, Page 213.

(Approved)

  
District Officer